# Before the Federal Communications Commission Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the Matter of:	, )
NewWave Communications	) ) ) MB Docket No. 17-2
Must-Carry Complaint of Ellington Broadcasting, WHCQ-LD, Cleveland, Mississippi	)
To: Media Bureau	)

#### OPPOSITION

Ultra Communications Group, LLC, d/b/a NewWave Communications

("NewWave") opposes the must-carry complaint filed by Ellington Broadcasting

("Ellington")¹ for carriage of WHCQ-LD on the grounds that the station does not qualify

for mandatory carriage as a low power television ("LPTV") station on NewWave's

system serving Leland, Mississippi. The Communications Act and the Commission's

rules are clear: carriage of "qualified" low power television stations applies only in

certain limited circumstances. As detailed below, WHCQ-LD fails to meet at least three

criteria, and the failure to meet just one disqualifies WHCQ-LD from mandatory

carriage. Accordingly, WHCQ-LD does not qualify for must carry on NewWave's Leland

System, and the Bureau must dismiss the Complaint.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Carriage Complaint Against NewWave Communications by Ellington Broadcasting with Respect to Carriage within the Leland, Mississippi Designated Market Area of Low Power Commercial Television Station WHCQ, Licensed to Cleveland, Mississippi. CSR-8932-M, MB Docket No. 17-2 (filed Dec. 28, 2016) ("Complaint").

#### **BACKGROUND**

NewWave and the Leland Cable System. NewWave operates twenty-five cable systems in nine states, serving primarily smaller communities and rural areas. The Complaint involves NewWave's Leland, Mississippi system (the "Leland System"), which NewWave has operated since 2013. The Leland System serves approximately 574 customers in Leland and the surrounding area in north Washington County, Mississippi. The system's service area is in the southwestern corner of the Greenwood-Greenville DMA.

Leland is approximately 26.46 miles from WHCQ-LD's transmitter.<sup>2</sup>

**WHCQ-LD.** According to Warren's Online TVFactbook,<sup>3</sup> WHCQ-LD is a low power commercial broadcast station licensed to Ellington Broadcasting, transmitting on channel 9 from Cleveland, Mississippi in the Greenwood-Greenville DMA. Cleveland is the community of license for the station.

Communications between NewWave and WHCQ-LD. The following chronology details the communications between the parties.

**September 2016**. On September 28, 2016, Ellington sent a request for must-carry to NewWave.<sup>4</sup> The letter stated, "[T]his letter should be considered a formal request for cable must-carry of low power television station WHCQ-LD Channel 9 broadcasting from Cleveland, Mississippi." The letter further requested that NewWave

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Exhibit 1 contains a map depicting the Leland System which shows the approximate distance between the system and WHCQ-LD's transmitter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Exhibit 2 contains a copy of WHCQ-LD's Warren's Online TVFactbook page.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Complaint at 3 (Letter from David Ellington, Owner, WHCQ-LD to General Manager, New Wave Communications, dated Sept. 28, 2016. The letter notes that the first attempt to contact New Wave by certified mail was returned on Sept. 26, 2016).

carry WHCQ-LD on cable channel 8, the virtual channel for WHCQ-LD, and contended that WHCQ-LD qualified for must-carry on the Leland System because it satisfied all of the Commission's must-carry criteria for low power commercial television stations.

The Complaint. Ellington provides a certificate of service showing a USPS receipt for the September 28, 2016 letter, which shows delivery and receipt by a NewWave representative on October 3, 2016. Ellington therefore argues that, because NewWave failed to respond to the must-carry request within 30 days, the Complaint is timely filed under the established 60-day window during which a broadcaster may file a must-carry complaint.<sup>5</sup> Utterly absent, however, is an analysis of the six requirements that a low power station must meet to qualify for must carry.<sup>6</sup> As explained below, WHCQ-LD fails to meet the requirements and is not entitled to must carry on NewWave's Leland System.

### <u>ANALYSIS</u>

Both the Communications Act and the Commission's rules require the carriage of "qualified" low power television stations only in certain limited circumstances. An LPTV station will be considered "qualified" if:

- The station broadcasts at least the minimum number of hours required under 47 C.F.R. Part 73;
- The station adheres to Commission requirements regarding nonentertainment programming and employment practices, and the Commission determines that the programming by the LPTV station would address local news and informational needs which are not being adequately served by full power television broadcast stations because of geographic distance of such full power stations from the low power station's community of license;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 76.61(a)(5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See 47 U.S.C. § 534(h)(2); 47 C.F.R. § 76.55(d)(1) – (6).

- The station complies with interference regulations consistent with its secondary status;
- The station is located no more than 35 miles from the cable system's headend and delivers to the principal headend an over-the-air signal of good quality;
- The community of license of the station and the franchise area of the cable system are both located outside the largest 160 Metropolitan Statistical Areas on June 30, 1990, and the population of such community of license on that date did not exceed 35,000; and
- There is no full power television broadcast station licensed to any community within the county or other political subdivision (of a State) served by the cable system.<sup>7</sup>

WHCQ-LD fails to meet at least three criteria, and the failure to meet just one disqualifies WHCQ-LD from mandatory carriage. Accordingly, WHCQ-LD does not qualify for must carry on NewWave's Leland System, and the Bureau must dismiss the Complaint.

# A. There is a Full Power Station, WXVT, Licensed to Greenville, a Community within Washington County, the county served by the cable system.

LPTV stations are only entitled to must carry if there is no full power television broadcast station licensed to any community within the county served by the cable system.<sup>8</sup> NewWave's Leland System is located in Washington County, Mississippi. WXVT, a full power commercial broadcast station affiliated with the CBS network, is licensed to Greenville, the county seat for Washington County.<sup>9</sup> Even a cursory review

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> *Id.* 

<sup>8 47</sup> C.F.R. § 76.55(d)(6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Exhibit 3 contains a copy of WXVT's Warren's Online TVFactbook page. See also FCC's online License database for WXVT, available at <a href="https://transition.fcc.gov/fcc-bin/tvq?call=WXVT&arn=&state=&city=&chan=0.0&cha2=69&serv=&type=&facid=&asrn=&list=0&ThisTab=Results+to+This+Page%2FTab&dist=&dlat2=&mlat2=&slat2=&NS=N&dlon2=&mlon2=&slon2=&EW=W&size=9 (last visited Jan. 18, 2017).</a>

by Ellington of WHCQ-LD's market and the area served by the Leland System should have unearthed this vital fact.

Based on WHCQ-LD's failure to meet this factor, the Complaint must be dismissed. Nonetheless, the Complaint also fails to meet two additional requirements, which we address in turn below.

# B. The Complaint Fails to Show Its Programming Addresses Needs Not Adequately Served by Full Power Broadcast stations.

It is well-established that LPTV stations bear the burden of producing evidence showing their programming addresses important news and local informational needs not adequately served by full power stations. Only when an LPTV station has demonstrated that it provides local programming does the burden shift to the cable operator to show that full power stations carried by the cable system provide adequate local programming.

Here, Ellington has not proffered any evidence that WHCQ-LD's programming addresses important news and local informational needs of the communities that NewWave serves. Instead, Ellington includes only one conclusory sentence – in the September 28, 2016 letter – that WHCQ-LD's programming meets local needs not addressed by the area's full power stations, without providing any evidentiary support

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Vision 3 Broadcasting, v. Time Warner Cable, Complaint for Carriage of WVBX-LP, Easton, Glens Falls, and Hudson Falls, New York, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 14 FCC Rcd 15348, ¶¶ 12-13 (1999) (the Media Bureau dismissed the complaint because the LPTV station failed to produce any evidence concerning local programming, finding the station's unsupported allegations insufficient).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Frances S. Smith d/b/a NCN Cable Advertising v. Cable One, Request for Carriage, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 18 FCC Rcd 9970 (2003).

for its claim. Ellington has therefore failed to meet its burden, and the Complaint must be dismissed.

# C. WHCQ-LD Fails to Deliver a Good Quality Signal to the Leland System's Principal Headend.

LPTV stations must meet the same signal strength requirements as a full power commercial station. Moreover, unlike a full power station, an LPTV station cannot cure a signal strength deficiency solely through a commitment to provide specialized equipment.<sup>12</sup>

Here, WHCQ-LD fails to satisfy one of the fundamental requirements of must carry – delivery of a good quality signal at or above -61 dBm. Due to low transmitter power and the distance between the station's transmitter and the Leland System headend, WHCQ-LD cannot deliver a good quality signal.

In response to the Complaint, and despite the presence of a full power station licensed within the same County, NewWave conducted a thorough signal strength test on January 5, 2017.<sup>13</sup> Those tests confirmed that WHCQ-LD failed to deliver a good quality signal. The signal strength reading was only –40 dBm, well under the good quality signal threshold. The Communications Act, Commission regulations and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See Complaint of Seeway Broadcasters against Continental Cablevision of Ohio, Petition for Reconsideration, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 13 FCC Rcd 20835, ¶ 8 (1998) ("[N]either the 1992 Cable Act nor [the Commission's] rules allows a low power television station to cure a signal quality deficiency with additional equipment as full power television stations are allowed to do."); see also WMTY, Inc. v. James Cable Partners; Request for Mandatory Carriage of Television Station W24DC Hamilton, Alabama, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 21 FCC Rcd 11709 (2006). A cable operator is also not required to carry an LPTV station with inadequate signal strength, even if the cable system carries other stations delivering similar signal levels. Billy Ray Washington v. Mediacom Communications Corp.; Request for Carriage of Television Station W62DE, Tifton, Georgia, Order on Reconsideration, 21 FCC Rcd 11706, ¶ 7 (2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> A copy of the signal strength test performed by New Wave is attached as Exhibit 4.

precedent lead to only one conclusion: when a local commercial broadcaster fails to deliver a good quality signal to a system's principal headend, the station is not entitled to mandatory carriage. Accordingly, the Bureau must dismiss the Complaint.

## CONCLUSION

As discussed above, WHCQ-LD does not qualify for must carry on NewWave's Leland System. The Media Bureau must dismiss the Complaint.

The undersigned verify that they have read this Opposition and to the best of their knowledge, information and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, the Opposition is well grounded in fact and is warranted by existing law, and it is not interposed for any improper purpose.

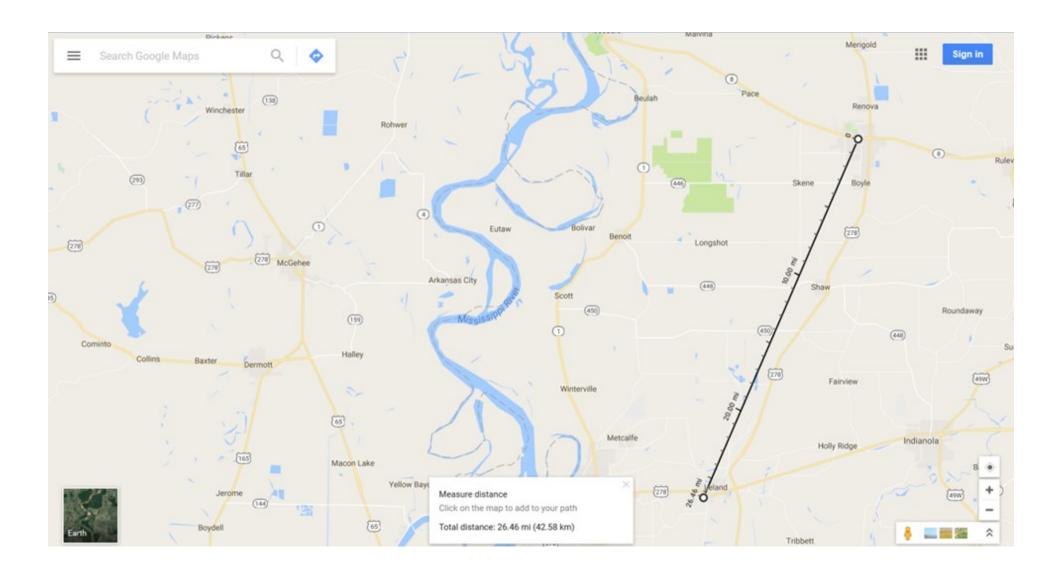
Respectfully submitted,

By:

Scott C. Friedman Becca A. Rabin Elizabeth M. Cuttner Cinnamon Mueller 307 N. Michigan Avenue Suite 1020 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 372-3930

Attorneys for Ultra Communications Group, LLC

January 24, 2017







Call Letters	WHCQ-LD (America One, COZI TV, ION) Cleveland (Ch 9) Cleveland, MS
Phone	662-375-2654
Email	dellington@cableone.net
Website	http://www.ionline.tv
Operating Status	Operating, Low Power/Translator
Network Service	ION, America One, COZI TV
Licensee	David Ellington PO Box 617 Webb, MS 38966
Studio Address	1321 Hwy 8 West Ste 12 Cleveland, MS 38732
Mailing Address	Ellington Broadcasting PO Box 617 Webb, MS 38966
Personnel	Chad Ellington, General Manager
Ownership	David Ellington
Began Operation	March 20, 1990
Technical Facilities	Operating Power Channel Number: 9 (186-192 MHz) Latitude: 33? 43' 36" Longitude: 90? 43' 44" Antenna: 0-ft. above av. terrain, 410-ft. above ground, 550-ft. above sea level ERP Power: 0.3 Application File Number: BMPDVL-20090916ADE  Holds CP for change to Channel Number: 0 ( Holds CP for change to Channel Number: 0 ( MHz)
	Latitude: 33? 43' 35.59"  Longitude: 90? 43' 43.65"  Antenna: -ft. above av. terrain, -ft. above ground, -ft. above sea level ERP Power: 3  Application File Number: 0000014139
City of License	Cleveland
Station DMA	Greenwood-Greenville, MS (Rank: 193)

Click here to report errors or omissions to this listing

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Nielsen TV Station Circulation
Circulation © 2016 Nielsen. Coverage based on Nielsen study.

Grand Total	Cable	Non-cable	Total
	TV Households	TV Households	TV Households
Estimated Station Totals*	20,552	22,819	43,371
Average Weekly Circulation (2016)	20,552	22,819	43,371

Station DMA Total	Cable TV Households	Non-cable TV Households	Total TV Households
Estimated Station Totals*	19,070	22,410	41,480
Average Weekly Circulation (2016)	19,070	22.410	41,480

Other DMA Total	Cable TV Households	Non-cable TV Households	Total TV Households
Estimated Station Totals*	1,482	409	1,891
Average Weekly Circulation (2016)	1,482	409	1,891

\*Estimated station totals are sums of the Nielsen TV and Cable household estimates for each county in which the station registers viewing of more than 5% as per the Nielsen Survey Methods.

City of License Greenville Station DMA Greenwood-Greenville, MS (Rank: 193)

# **NewWave Communications**

**WHCQ-LD Channel 8** 

SIGNAL TEST DATA

**January 5, 2017** 

#### **NewWave Communications Signal Strength Test Report**

### **STATION**

Station: WHCQ-LD

Channel: 8

Frequency: \_\_187 MHz\_\_\_

Headend: Leland, MS

**Latitude**: \_\_33-43-36\_\_\_\_\_

Longitude: \_\_90-43-44\_\_\_\_\_

### **BEARING TO STATION**

(Antenna Oriented for Maximum Signal Level): \_\_\_yes\_\_\_\_

**Distance to Station:** \_26 Miles

Receiving Tower Height: 302'

Receiving Antenna Height: 10'

Measuring Instrument Manufacturer: JDSU

Make/Model: Dsam6300

Age of Unit: 3 months

Calibration Date: At time of purchase

#### <u>ANTENNA</u>

**Antenna Manufacturer:** 

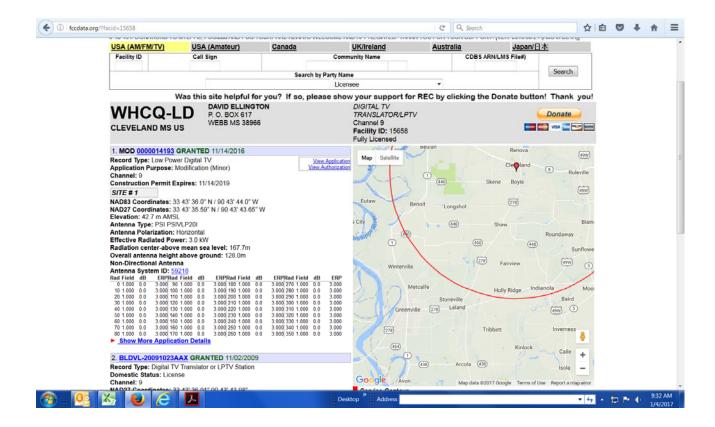
Model: CM-3018

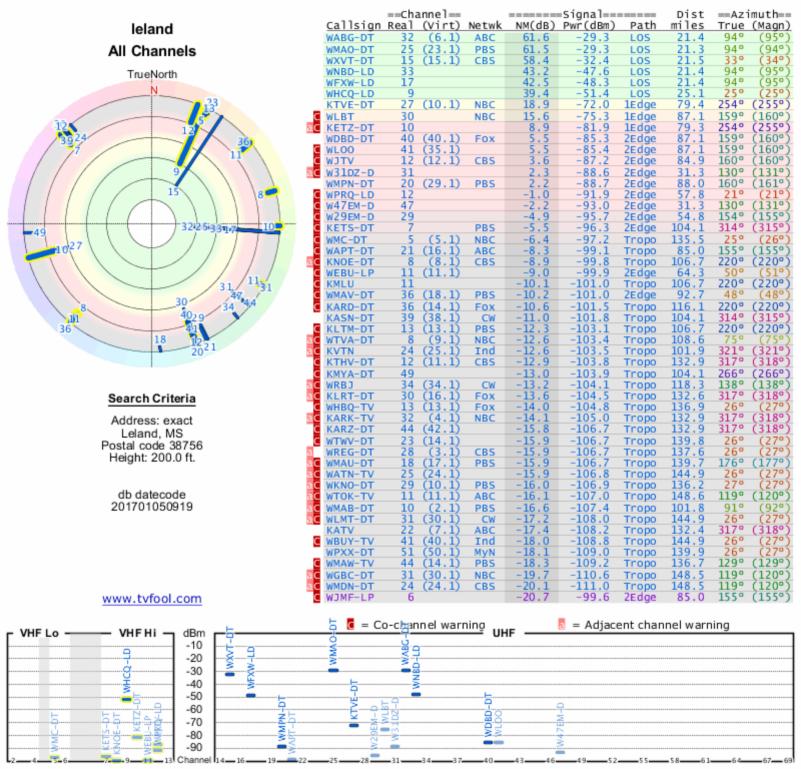
Gain: 8.2dB

Range: 60 miles

Radiation Pattern: NA

Date	Time	Temp. (°F)	Weather Conditions	Signal Level (dBmV)	Signal Level (dBm)
1/5/17	11:00 AM	38	Cloudy	-40	





### **Certificate of Service**

I, Alma Hoxha, paralegal with the law firm of Cinnamon Mueller, hereby certify that a copy of the Opposition was served via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested on the 24th day of January, 2017 to the following:

David Ellington Ellington Broadcasting P.O. Box 617 Webb, MS 38966

> Alma Hoxha Paralegal